

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MBABAN 01745 201044Z

ACTION HA-05

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DODE-00 SP-02 /041 W

-----059266 211823Z /47

R 191400Z MAY 78

FM AMEMBASSY MBABANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4809

INFO AMEMBASSY GABORONE

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SREF, WZ

SUBJECT: REFUGEE SITUATION IN SWAZILAND

1. I MET MAY 19 FOR TOUR D' HORIZON WITH UNHCR REP SABITI, WHO RETURNED FROM GENEVA CONSULTATIONS THIS WEEK. HIS MAIN ASSIGNMENT ON RETURNING TO SWAZILAND WAS TO CONVEY UNHCR POSITION ON FINANCING MPAKA REFUGEE CENTER. UNHCR HAD TOLD GOS SOME MONTHS AGO THAT GENEVA WAS PREPARED TO CONTRIBUTE DOLS 736,000 FOR CONSTRUCTION OF COMBINED RESIDENTIAL-TRANSIT-SCHOOL FACILITY AT MPAKA. WITHOUT CONSULTING UNHCR, GOS LET CONTRACT FOR DOLS 1,457,533, I.E., ABOUT DOUBLE THE ORIGINAL AMOUNT. UNHCR/GENEVA, DISPLEASED ABOUT HANDLING OF CONTRACT AND UNHAPPY WITH CERTAIN ASPECTS OF PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDING DOUBLE FENCING FOR PORTION OF FACILITY), HAS TAKEN POSITION THAT IT IS NOT RPT NOT PREPARED TO INCREASE ITS ORIGINAL COMMITMENT. SABITI, ACCOMPANIED BY UNHCR/GENEVA OFFICIAL MKHANDA, HAD UNPLEASANT TASK OF INFORMING PRIME MINISTER AND DEPUTY PRIMIN. SABITI SAID BOTH TOOK THE INFO IN STRIDE. SABITI SAID NOT TO BE SURPRISED, HOWEVER, IF GOS APPROACHED BILATERAL DONORS DIRECTLY FOR SHORTFALL AMOUNT. SABITI WILL MEET NEXT WEEK WITH GOS OFFICIALS IN ATTEMPT TO SCALE DOWN CURRENT ESTIMATES, INCLUDING REMOVING PROPOSED PRISON-LIKE FENCING.

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PAGE 02 MBABAN 01745 201044Z

2. SINCE HIS RETURN, SABITI HAS NOT VISITED THE SOUTH AFRICAN STUDENTS IN THEIR CAMPS/HOSTEL. HE WILL MEET WITH THEM AFTER CLASSES RESUME MAY 23. THE FEW REFUGEE STUDENTS HE HAS SEEN ON THE STREET, HOWEVER, HAVE SEEMED REASONABLY HAPPY, GLAD TO BE RELEASED FROM DETENTION.

3. ELEVEN PAC DETAINEES ARE STILL IN JAIL, ACCORDING TO SABITI.
AS FOR ACCESS, SOME DAYS FAMILIES CAN VISIT AND ON OTHER DAYS THEY
CANNOT.

4. SABITI KNOWS OF SEVEN MOZAMBICANS IN CUSTODY. FIVE REMAIN
FROM THE EIGHT REPORTED EARLIER; THE OTHER TWO ARE RECENT ARRIVALS.
ALL SEVEN ARE OUT OF JAIL, BEING ACCOMMODATED AT A JUVENILE
"HOME" NEAR THE SOUTH AFRICAN MALE REFUGEE CAMP. (COMMENT:
THIS IS AN IMPROVEMENT OVER THEIR EARLIER LOCATION, WHICH WAS
COUNTRY'S CENTRAL PRISON. NO EXPLANATION FOR MOVE.) SABITI HAD
NO NEWS ABOUT FATE OF THREE MOZAMBICANS WHO HAD BEEN RETURNED TO
MOZAMBIQUE BY SAWZI POLICE.

5. AS FOR HELPING TO MOVE SOUTH AFRICAN SECONDARY-LEVEL STUDENTS TO
OTHER AFRICAN COUNTRIES, SABITI WILL MEET AFTER MAY 23 WITH
MENNONITE ADMINISTRATORS OF MBABANE REFUGEE SCHOOL TO DISCUSS
ALL ASPECTS OF THIS ISSUE, INCLUDING LIKELY NUMBER WANTING TO MOVE,
THEIR QUALIFICATIONS, BEST ARRANGEMENTS FOR SCREENING AND COUNSELING
THEM, ETC. SABITI WILL INFORM ME OF OUTCOME, SO WE CAN DETERMINE
SCOPE OF POSSIBLE USG INVOLVEMENT, IF ANY, IN THIS EXERCISE;
I HAVE MADE IT CLEAR THAT USG NOT COMMITTED AT THIS STAGE TO
ANY PARTICIPATION IN EXERCISE. SABITI SAID SOME STUDENTS MIGHT NOT
WANT TO MOVE TOO FAR FROM SOUTH AFRICA, PREFERRING TO RESIGN
THEMSELVES TO COMPLETING THEIR STUDIES IN SWAZILAND. HE ADDED,
PRIVATELY, THAT UNHCR/GENEVA MIGHT BE RELUCTANT IN ANY EVENT TO
SEE ALL OF THE STUDENTS REMOVED BECAUSE IT WOULD BE WASTE OF
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PAGE 03 MBABAN 01745 201044Z

FUNDS BEING PUT INTO MPAKA CENTER.

6. SABITI SAID NO NEW SOUTH AFRICAN REFUGEES HAD ARRIVED SINCE
MARCH 1978. HE AND WE ATTRIBUTE THIS IN PART TO FACT THAT WORD OF
SWAZILAND'S INHOSPITALITY HAS SPREAD AMONG POTENTIAL SOUTH AFRICAN
REFUGEES.
WACHOB

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